**Business Emails in English**

Emails are less formal than letters. When sent to a client or a superior they should not be too informal, but those sent to either colleagues or people with whom you have a working relationship, you can write as you would speak to them. This means you can address them with their first name (this is common in the English speaking world) and use abbreviated verbs such as “I’d” instead of I would, “I’ll” for I will etc, use the second person “you” rather than third person as with formal communication.

To help with this I have tried to order the following phrases from *Formal* at the top of each section to *Informal* at the bottom.

I usually make the first email a bit more formal (tend to use “Dear Mr. Smith” for example) but relax the style when the reply is signed with name and surname, John Smith, (so the next email would be Dear John).

Keep the sentences short and simple.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section of communication** | **Formal letter** | **Email** |
| Recipient | Address of person | Email address |
| Date | Written under the address | Automatic |
| Object | Formal statement, usually written after the salutation | “Oggetto” – keep it short and clear |
| Salutation(if you don’t know the name) (eg. writing to an info@xxx.com) | To whom It may concern,  Dear Sir or Madam, | Dear Sir or Madam,  Hello, |
| Salutation if you know the name | Dear Mr. Smith, | Dear John,  Hi John,  John |
| Small talk (informal, don’t overuse it as it can be seen as a waste of time, but does help develop a relationship) | I hope you are well. | How are you.  It was nice to see you at...  How was your holiday / party...?  Did the meeting go well? |
| Introduction (The reason why you are communicating) | I am writing in reference to...your letter of the 15th September  Further to your letter...  Regarding our discussion yesterday ... | In reference to... your letter/email; our meeting/conversation  Further to...  Following...  I thank you for your prompt reply...  After our chat yesterday I thought ...  Thanks for your email, I think that...  I just wanted to... |
| Development | I would be grateful if you would ....  Please find enclosed | I would be grateful if you would send me/ arrange / develop /get in touch with me ...  I would appreciate it if you could...  It would be helpful if you could...  Would you...  Could you send me...?  I think that we need to...  Please find the attached file as promised. |
| Offering help | Would you like us to...  We would be happy to...  We are willing to... | Would you like me to...  I would be happy to...  I’m willing to... |
| Good news | We are pleased to announce...  We are pleased to inform you... | I’m pleased to say that  I’m happy to say that... |
| Bad news | I regret that/ to inform you  Unfortunately I cannot... | I’m afraid that...  I’m sorry but... |
| Complaint | I am writing to express our dissatisfaction with... | I am not happy with... |
| Meetings | Sorry I will not be able to attend the meeting on... | Could we set a meeting with John and Steve at say 08:00 on Monday?  Could you arrange a meeting with ....  I’ll email an agenda to you.  I just wanted to confirm the/our meeting...  Sorry, I can’t make it to the meeting on ... |
| Closing | If you have any further questions please don’t hesitate to get in touch with me.  I look forward to hearing from you. | If you have any further questions please don’t hesitate to get in touch with me.  I look forward to hearing from you.  Please keep me informed.  Please keep in touch.  Will be in touch... |
| Signing Off (if you don’t know the name) | Yours faithfully, | Yours faithfully,  Yours,  Regards, |
| Signing Off (if you know the name) | Yours sincerely,  Sincerely yours,  Kind regards,  Best regards,  Best wishes, | Kind regards,  Best regards,  Regards,  Yours,  Thankyou,  Cheers, |

DO include telephone number or skype account information if they need to contact you directly.

Think about how direct you want to be:

I need this by tomorrow / Would it be possible to have this by tomorrow?

There will be a delay / I’m afraid there will be a delay

It’s a bad idea / I’m not sure it’s such a good idea.

Try to use positive words:

Good question, helpful, please, agree, opportunity, I’d be happy to, It would be useful if,